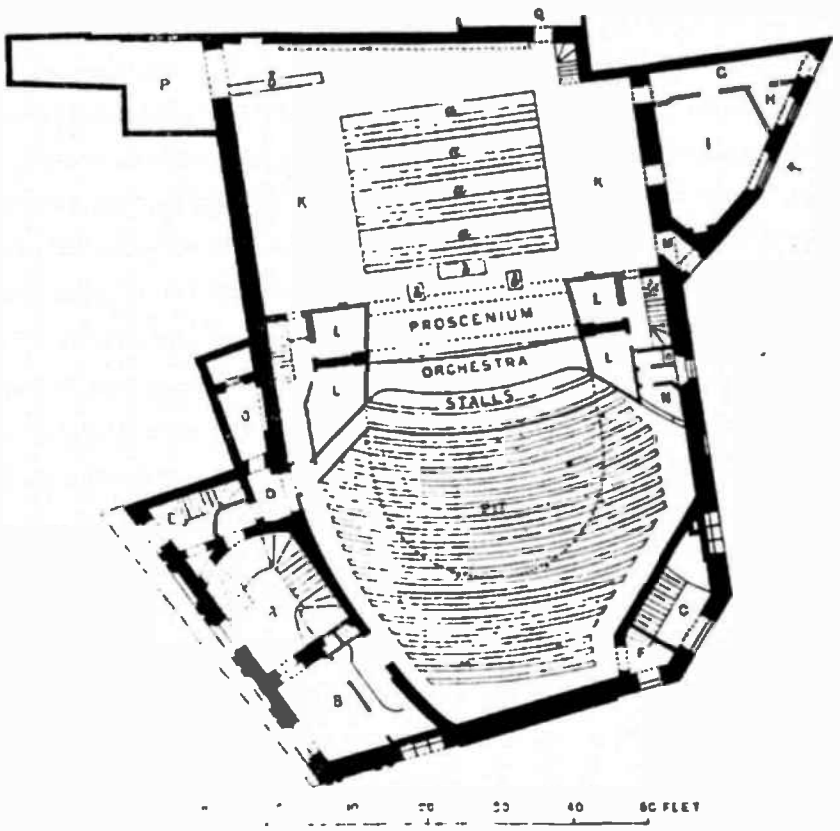
PLAN OF THE OLYMPIC THEATRE.



REFERENCES.

A Box entrance.
B Pit entrance.
C Gallery entrance.
D Entrance to stalls from box entrance.
E Staircase from gallery; and second way out in case of accident.
F A second way out from pit.
G Stage entrance.
H Porter.
I Green-room.
K K Stage.
a a a a Sliders.
b b b b Traps.
L Private boxes.
M Entrance for machinery, &c., to stage.
N Refreshments, W. C., &c.
O Urinal, &c.
P Dock for stowing away scenery.
Q Entrance from manager's house—fire-proof.

We have now to speak of the decorations, which were entrusted to Mr. Aglio, and executed by him and his son, Mr. Aglio, jun.*

The ceiling is divided into four compartments, representing the Seasons,—each compartment being separated by ornamental designs in the Arabesque style, connected in the centre in an ornament giving apparent support to the chandelier. Under each of these four compartments are panels with Arabesque ornaments on gold ground, in the centre being introduced, in *chiaro-scuro*, the sign of the Zodiac marking the entrance of each season. These panels form a band enclosing the circle, and are surrounded by a *bordure*, in *chiaro-scuro*, on blue ground, which connects the two spandrils, formed by the circle closing with the arch of the proscenium. On these spandrils are introduced two groups, allegorical of Music and Poetry.

The front of the gallery and box tiers is divided into seven compartments, by the gilded and bronzed columns supporting the boxes and gallery. Each compartment in the gallery tier is decorated with Arabesque ornaments, within which are introduced masks, musical instruments, and cameos, in *chiaro-scuro*, on gold ground. Those of the box tier are decorated with richly-worked Arabesques, on gold and coloured grounds. A general symmetry is preserved in the decoration of these compartments, but no subject is repeated. *Chiaro-scuro* figures of Cupid, on blue ground, form caryatides over and under the columns of the boxes. Of the general effect when lighted, we have not yet had an opportunity to judge.

The proscenium is intended simply to form a frame to the decorations of the stage,—the predominant colours white and gold. The ornaments of the arch are in *chiaro-scuro*; in the centre of these are represented the Muses, with their appropriate attributes. The upper proscenium boxes are decorated with groups of masks, allusions to Tragedy and Comedy; the lower ones with cameos of poets, on gold ground, surrounded by light-coloured arabesques. The pilasters supporting the arch are decorated with arabesque ornaments, in three divisions; in the centre are introduced the crests of the proprietor of the land, Lord Craven, and of the theatre, Mr. Cavell. In the composition of the cups the artist has introduced the phœnix. The decorations were designed and painted in the short space of seven weeks.

The front of the house is lighted by a large chandelier, manufactured by Mr. Apsley Pellatt. The gas fittings were put up by Mr. J. Palmer, jun., and present several useful precautionary measures, which we will note in our next number.

The entrance front of the building, which is formed in cement, is simple and unpretending. It presents a large cornice with low attic above. There is a series of five windows filled in with iron guards of ornamental pattern, and below is an arcade of five arches, three of which are entrances, and two blanks.

The exact cost of the theatre has not been arrived at, but it is stated by the architect as under 10,000*l.*, including the cost of purchasing some adjoining property. There was not time to obtain competition tenders, and Mr. Holland was employed as the builder at a fixed scale of prices. The work was measured monthly, and 85 per cent. of the work executed paid for on the 1st of each month. The work is very well done, and all parties seem satisfied one with another.

The act drop, partly shown in our view, representing an "Italian loggia opening on a cortile," was painted by Messrs. Dayes and Gordon, and is a very creditable work.

* We hear with regret that Mr. Aglio is suffering from a paralytic seizure, and lies in a very precarious state.

BUILDING SOCIETIES.

The writers who have addressed us in reply to some observations in a recent number of our journal (p. 554 *ante*), all assume as certain a variety of issues, which are more than doubtful. Many who still maintain that these societies, if well managed, would greatly benefit the provident classes, are obliged to admit that the result in practice will be very different in certain cases from what they anticipated.

One well informed correspondent says,—

It seems to me that building societies are founded upon true principles, and are calculated, if well managed, to be of the utmost benefit to the provident classes. But I quite agree with the writer in THE BUILDER, that in practice they have not answered the expectations formed of them, more particularly with reference to the interests of the "working-man." This arises, I believe, principally from bad management. It unfortunately happens that the majority of societies are got up by needy professional men, and, in many cases, from interested motives. Such men have no inducement to bring the operations of the society to an early conclusion, but rather the reverse, as the longer the society lasts the more they make out of it.

Such a state of things operates most prejudicially against societies of an inferior class, as the members are generally working-men, without education, and are consequently entirely led by the managers of the society, whom they trust implicitly, as possessing superior knowledge; and if the trust is abused the society gets saddled with inferior or bad property, which altogether frustrates the objects of the members. With the better class of societies this objection does not apply with so much force,—the members are generally better educated, and capable of looking after their own interests. I think very few building societies will be found to work out in a satisfactory way; and of those who do so the number will be very small of that class to which the "working-man" generally belongs.

J. W.

In several such societies which we have been watching, the solicitors and the surveyors connected with them, have performed their duties so ill, that confusion is inevitable; deeds on which much depended are found valueless, and houses taken as securities are turning out positive mill-stones. The mere recital of some facts within our own knowledge would utterly blast the reputation of three professional men. Not long ago we were requested, as an act of personal friendship, by a director of a building society, to give a confidential opinion as to the value of a property *offered* to them, as he said. It was a house of business in London, held for a long term, at ninety pounds per annum, on a stringent lease, and let to a tenant-at-will for 140*l.* per annum. The premises were not in good repair, the situation declining, and after going over the house our reply was, as many readers will guess, that the assignment of such a property would be *worse than no security at all*. We then learned that it had been valued as an assured income of 30*l.* per annum, for the unexpired term, and accepted by the society for a loan of 500*l.*

The house is now on the hands of the society unlet, and in its present state, we venture to assert, will not command a tenant at the rent the society are bound to pay.

We most seriously urge gentlemen acting as surveyors for such societies, to exercise the greatest care in estimating the value of securi-

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